

The Communique'

With this issue of the Communique' we catch up on many events that have occurred since the last issue and before the 2003 Fire Season. The next issue of the newsletter will deal with Fire Season, the historic Southern California Fire Siege and CDF's tremendous efforts alongside firefighters from so many other agencies.

Due to the severity of the budget situation, with this issue we also begin, for the foreseeable future, Communique's produced only in electronic format. The newsletter will be produced on a bi-monthly schedule, along with special editions as necessary, and posted to the CDF Website in both a color format that includes photos, and an all-text version for easier downloading.

The CDF Public Education Office encourages submissions of articles and

photos from CDF employees and retirees on the following schedule:

March/April

Deadline April 10

May/June

Deadline June 10

July/August

Deadline August 10

September/October

Deadline October 10

November/December

Deadline December 10

January/February

Deadline February 10

Personnel Transactions and Kudos are produced monthly and posted on the CDF website.

Contact the CDF Public Education Office at 916-653-5123.

The CDF 100 Year Commemorative History Book

As many of you know, the CDF is in the process of publishing an all new commemorative history book to celebrate its 100th Anniversary. Hundreds of you have responded by submitting photographs, stories, and book orders, but still hundreds more have yet to participate.

This historic full-color book will document the proud history of our department, with hundreds of historic photographs as well as candid and action pictures. Events of the past will be recorded, along with stories written by employees and retirees. Veterans of CDF understand the importance of what we do and the memories this album will preserve. For those who are new to the department, this book will demonstrate the proud tradition of your new career, a shining example of the call you have answered. The number of books printed will be based on the number of copies reserved in advance-so *don't miss out on this unique opportunity!* We want to be sure everyone is included!

Here's Your Chance to Be a Part of This Book!

We need all CDF members and retirees to participate so that our book may be as complete as possible. ***The FINAL deadline for participation has been extended until July 1, 2004.*** Both materials and book orders need to be in by this final deadline. This is your book ... a tribute to your service to your community and the perfect heirloom to pass on to future generations.

This Book Will Contain

- History of the CDF from 1905-2005;
- Full-color pictorial section with historic and modern photos throughout the state.
- Station information with group shots and action photographs;
- In Memoriam tribute to CDF personnel killed in the line of duty, and much more.

COMMEMORATIVE HISTORY BOOK ORDER FORM

Send your materials to:

Dick Hayes • P.O. Box 944246 • Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

CDF Commemorative Book Order Form

Scheduled for delivery Spring 2005

- ☐ Please reserve _____ copies of the CDF *Deluxe Edition*, Only \$55.00!
- ☐ Please reserve _____ copies of the CDF *Collector's Leather Edition*, Only \$79.00!
- ☐ Front cover name embossing, \$6.00.
- ☐ Shipping/Handling:
\$7.00 first book; \$4.00 each add'l copy
- ☐ Kentucky residents add 6% sales tax

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

**FINAL DEADLINE:
JULY 1, 2004**

For Office Use Only—SFFMA-3-RWB

Bio _____	Ck # _____
# photos _____	Amount _____
Bio photos #s _____	Emboss Code _____

Mail your check/money order to:

CDF Yearbook c/o Turner Publishing Company
P.O. Box 3101 • Paducah, KY 42002-3101
(270) 443-0121

Your Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Telephone

Name to be embossed*

**Please print the name to be embossed, up to 24 spaces.
This must be completed to have your book embossed.*

California Firefighters Memorial

by Josh Hubbard, staff writer, CDF Public Education Office

Hundreds of family members, friends, uniformed firefighters, and representatives from all over the state gathered at the California Firefighter Memorial May 22 to participate in the First Annual California Firefighter Memorial service held in Capitol Park in Sacramento.

Since the unveiling of the California Firefighter Memorial on April 6, 2002, 13 firefighters have fallen in the line of duty protecting California. The names of these courageous Firefighters were permanently inscribed on the memorial wall symbolizing the courage, honor, respect and devotion to duty that represents the essence of the firefighting profession.

Also added to the wall were

the names of 45 newly confirmed casualties from previous years. This brings the total to 913 firefighters who have made the ultimate sacrifice protecting and serving in a proud tradition of California firefighters since we became a state in 1850.

The memorial wall serves as the centerpiece of the California Firefighter Memorial and serves to remind us of those individuals who courageously placed others before themselves. In addition to the wall the memorial includes two statues that represent the joy and pain of the job. The first statue "Holding the Line," depicts four firefighters advancing a hose line up a hill in a fierce battle. The second statue "Fallen Brother," depicts an emotional

scene of one firefighter carrying the lifeless body of a fellow firefighter to safety.

The California Firefighter Memorial is located in the shadow of the State Capitol in Sacramento in the east lawn of Capitol Park, which is also home to other memorials such as the Korean and Vietnam memorials.

Funding for the firefighter memorial was raised by the California Fire Foundation and came from the sale of firefighting license plates, special firefighter credit cards and state income tax donations.

The memorial is a truly humbling experience that represents the brave individuals who may be gone, but certainly will never be forgotten.

Fire Prevention in the spotlight *Wildfire Awareness Week* *Sacramento*

Never has the importance of fire safety and prevention been more prominent than during the 2003 Fire Season. The challenge to spread the fire prevention message, from clearance, to proper building materials, to stop, drop and roll, is ongoing. Wildfire Awareness Week is a significant opportunity to put prevention in the spotlight.

While Wildfire Awareness Week (WAW) was May 5-11, CDFers know that fire prevention is a year-round effort. However, each year WAW allows us a chance to really push our messages of warning to residents of California to prepare for fire

season by taking the proper actions to ensure their homes and families will survive in the event of a wildfire. The 2003 theme for Wildfire Awareness Week was "Defensible Space is Your Responsibility."

Wildfire Awareness Week is an annual event, proclaimed by the Governor, and coordinated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, to remind the people of California of the importance of fire safety and cooperation in providing defensible space for firefighters.

To kick-off WAW 2003, CDF Sacramento Headquarters coordinated with the CDF Nevada-

Yuba-Placer Unit for an event on the Auburn Headquarters lawn featuring demonstrations of fire fighting techniques and fire prevention and safety messages. During the event CDF Director Andrea Tuttle stressed the need for homeowners to do their part and work with fire agencies to provided the necessary safety precautions, and Deputy Director Jim Wright warned Californian's that the late rains had only created additional fuel for the upcoming fire season. Local homeowners who had lost their homes during wildfires drove

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WAW: from page 3

home the importance of defensible space.

Fire prevention dogs Miss Evie and Tuffy displayed their Stop, Drop and Roll, and 911 dialing techniques to local first graders, and CDF also used the event to unveil its new and improved fire safety education website offering valuable historical and interactive safety information that applies to all age ranges.

Fire safety awareness and responsibility is up to each one of us, and a variety of events were held throughout the State during Wildfire Awareness Week to encourage Californians get ready and become aware of the threats.

Wildfire Awareness Week Butte Unit

*by Janet Marshall,
fire prevention specialist II,
Butte Unit*

With a short reprieve from rainy weather, the Butte Unit's Wildfire Awareness Week (WAW) "Fire Safe Open House" event was a success despite cool temperatures and showers earlier in the week. Su and Gerry Schlecht graciously offered their new home, which is built from fire safe materials, as the site for Butte's 2003 WAW celebration. Communique readers and those who responded to Butte's destructive "Poe" Fire in 2001 may remember Su and Gerry Schlecht's dramatic rescue by Fire Apparatus Engineer (FAE) Matt McKenzie and his crew off CDF Engine 2180 during the first half hour of the incident.

"Those kids saved our lives," stated Su Schlecht. "If they wouldn't have been there to rescue us, we wouldn't be here today to share our story."

The Schlechts' story is one of tenaciousness and lessons learned. Their stunning log home in the pines had 30' clearance but it was no match for the firestorm that raced out of the draw towards it that September morning. While Su and Gerry frantically tried to round up their animals, the fire intensified. CDF Engine 2180 was in the area doing structure protection and proceeded up the Schlechts' driveway to take a stand and try and protect the home. FAE McKenzie and Firefighter I Amy Brown deployed hose lines while Firefighter I's Ryan Babb and Tim Maxwell calmed the Schlechts, coaxing them into the relative safety of their home to shelter in place. The fire blew up and the resulting firestorm incinerated Matt and Amy's hoselines, eliminating their water supply. They were able to take refuge in the engine and maintain contact via radio with the rest of the crew and the Schlechts who were inside the structure. As the conflagration grew, the back of the home burst into flame and fire was literally rolling over the heads of those inside who were laying face down on the ground holding hands, the calm encouragement of Firefighters Babb and Maxwell belying their own fear. Meanwhile, the firestorm burned just as intensely outside, prompting FAE McKenzie to instruct his crew to hold out for as long as they could. When the fire briefly subsided, McKenzie gave the order to get the Schlechts to the engine just moments before the house became fully involved. As

the engine made its way to safety, the hosebed burst into flame but the crew of Engine 2180 and the Schlechts escaped unharmed.

The Schlechts had moved to the Concow area to retire and became very active in their community. These were just two of the factors that they considered when making their decision to rebuild on the same property. The Schlechts consulted with their local Firesafe Council and CDF fire personnel on building materials and home placement. Using a local contractor, the Schlechts' new home was built using 4-coat stucco, metal roofing and fire safe landscaping.

"The silver lining is that we never realized what an amazing view we have," stated Jerry Schlecht. "We can see all the way down the Feather River drainage into the valley. On clear days, we've even seen Mt. Tamalpais!"

With a million dollar view, a beautiful new home and a tight knit community of friends and neighbors, the Schlechts are very happy in their new home. Though the topography and wind patterns in the Concow area predispose it to catastrophic wildfires, the Schlechts home has more than a fighting chance to withstand anything Mother Nature could throw at it.

"The Schlechts shouldn't be surprised to find us in their driveway setting up a command post the next time a large fire hits this area," stated *Assistant Chief Bill Holmes. "They have done an amazing job rebuilding their home and have made some good decisions that will greatly increase their homes chance for surviving a wildfire."

***Chief Bill Holmes is now the
CDF Amador-El Dorado Unit
Chief. See Special Edition -
New Chiefs.**

Fire resistive landscape exhibit ties in with WAW

***Karen Guillemin,
fire prevention specialist II,
Fresno-Kings Unit***

In the spring of 2001 I was contacted by Mova Verde from the California State Parks (CSP) and asked to meet with her and Mr. Dave Woolley from the Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). At the meeting I was asked if I would be interested in putting a fire resistive plant display together at the visitor center at Millerton Lake. What transformed from this meeting was a partnership between the Department of the Interior, State Parks, California State University Fresno (CSUF) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). I was given the opportunity to design a fire resistive plant display on a site at the Millerton Lake Visitor Center. Mr. Woolley had received a grant to remodel and renovate the visitor center. His desire was to turn it into a Water Education Garden with the Fire Resistive Landscape component.

I put together a plan for my "dream" exhibit for Mr. Woolley. We had several meetings to discuss the details. I was given an area of land that included a slope to create my exhibit. Mr. Woolley was using the Intermountain Nursery in Prather, to provide the plant materials for the rest of the project. The Nursery specializes in native, draught tolerant plants which made my selection of plant materials more available. I had

a number of meetings with Bonnie from the Intermountain Nursery, we discussed fire resistive plant lists, proper plant placement, the zone theory of planting, and defensible space. A number of blue prints were developed and we decided on the one that is currently in place. Grant dollars paid for all of the plant materials.

Over the next two years I worked with Chief Doug Hicks, Chief Michael Nation, Chief Ron Subia and Chief Pete Marquez to schedule hand crews to prepare the site for planting. I also met with Chief Jim Smith and brought him into the project. He had helpful suggestions and was very supportive. It was Chief Smith's suggestion to create the Vegetation Management Area (VMP) for the garden. While the crew was preparing the site I had a wonderful idea to create a pad and construct a "house" at the top of our slope, to provide a more comprehensive fire prevention message for the public. Mr. Woolley agreed and I scheduled a crew to prepare the construction site and build the house. We decided on a pre-fab "house", the crew poured the foundation and the "house" was delivered. The crew built a rock creek for the exhibit, planted a VMP demonstration area, installed "log siding" to the house, constructed a walkway, and provided valuable labor for the site, weed eating, cleaning, and maintaining the area. I then asked if we could construct a deck off the "house" for greater visual impact and additional information for the public. Mr. Woolley provided the materials and a fire crew constructed the deck. One half of the deck is our "good" example and one half is our "bad" example. Fresno State University

Center for Irrigation Technology installed the irrigation system and a crew of volunteers, including myself, planted the plants. I have also been a member of the weed patrol for the garden.

The CSP system provides tours of this facility for 4,000 Fresno County school children each year. I was asked to be a mentor and to provide training for the tour guides for our fire resistive exhibit area. The education team has contributed many hours toward the development of the garden, the education center, tours, and the learning packet. The learning packet was designed to correlate with the California State Content Standards for Science and Historical-Social Science. This team included David Wooley DOI, Millerton State Park Recreation Area staff, Ted Jackson, Vince Sereno, Shirley Spencer, and Mova Verde; Center for Irrigation Technology, CSUF education coordinator Marilyn Creel, and me. When a school contacts the CSP for a tour the teacher is provided with a learning packet prior to their visit. The class can then prepare for what they will be viewing. The materials in the packet explore aspects of the San Joaquin River watershed, riparian environment, water cycles, Water Education Garden and the Fire Resistive Landscape exhibit. Further, there are worksheets that may be reproduced for student use. All of this was also made possible by grants from the BOR/DOI.

A partial list of fire resistive plants, common sense landscaping for a fire safe yard, and a self guided tour of the exhibit, plant education information, description of "zones" Fire Prevention

See LANDSCAPE, page 6

LANDSCAPE: from page 5

Tips by Month, and fire's role in nature are currently included. Plans are in the works to include word search, 10 questions for each student to look for and answer on the tour, and a few other fun learning ideas. After each visit each student is provided a Smokey Bear color book or puzzle book depending on age.

The exhibit is completely signed with photographs of the display and titles of the plant materials used with common and botanical names.

I am in the process of developing the inside of our "house". It currently has a wooden statue of "Smokey", the true story of Smokey Bear, posters, information on 911, stop, drop, and roll, defensible space, fire's role in nature, watershed, addressing, and, "Are You Doing The Right Thing The Wrong Way?". I am working with SBC Communications to create a 911 simulator for the interior of the house for use on the guided tours. The entire exhibit is handicap accessible.

The Fire Resistive Landscape Exhibit was officially presented to the public on May 8, 2003. This was the date for the Fresno Kings Unit Wildfire Awareness Week media event. In addition to television, radio and newspaper coverage of the exhibit and wildfire awareness information on May 8 a follow up program on Channel 24 was developed. Jack Nolden presented the exhibit on his two minute makeover segment Tuesday May 20, 2003.

**Wildfire Awareness
Week 2004 in
California is
May 9-15**

Prescribed Fire and Mastication

by Tracy Boudreaux, fire prevention specialist II, Mendocino Unit

On May 15, 2003 multi-agencies gathered at the University of California, Hopland research extension center in the Mendocino Unit for a unique presentation and tour of the effects of prescribed fire and mastication in Northern California chaparral. This vegetation management project was created to assist the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the University of California in conducting prescribed fire treatments for a chaparral research study.

Jennifer Potts, a student at UC Berkley working on her Phd. in environmental science, policy and management, chose this difficult five-year research project as her dissertation. Jennifer presented her scientific research through video and a field tour. She showed the effects of seasonal treatments for fire hazard reduction, recovery of vegetation, ecosystem function, resurgence of fuels and costs of the different treatments.

The project began in the fall of 2001 after a federal grant applied for by UC Berkley and BLM was approved.

Chaparral makes up 6 percent of California's vegetation. Like a forest, chaparral has many different species. Common characteristics include flammability and dense structure. It is known that through prescribed burning or mastication we can decrease the effects of wildfire by reducing the flammability and rate of spread. The controversy has always been what time of year is best for vegetation management and whether or not to burn or use mastication. Other

serious concerns are what effects these measures have on plant species, soil and wildlife.

To begin the project 20 different 5-acre plots of land in replication were chosen in 30-year-old chaparral. These plots were located at the University of California Hopland Research Extension Center, and BLM Cow Mountain Recreation Area in both Mendocino and Lake counties. Pre-treatment information was gathered from these plots in both fall and summer of 2001.

Then came two years of prescribed burns and mastication. This included four fall burns, four winter burns and four spring burns. The burning for this research project was conducted and coordinated by CDF. This was a unique vegetation management burn project due to the great importance of its outcome. The burns went on without incident thanks to the extensive efforts of Mendocino Unit Battalion 3 and foresters from Jackson Demonstration State Forest.

Mastication duplicated the efforts of the prescribed burns, including the time of year, but excluding winter due to potential erosion problems.

Jennifer observes and monitors these plots continually with the focus on environmental impacts. Depending upon which season the projects took place the plant life was effected differently. During pretreatment certain species were noted. After treatment some plots showed an exchange of species composition. A change in plant species can dramatically affect the food

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source for wildlife. This in turn impacts the whole ecosystem. It is important to know the exchange of composition because with chaparral this exchange is permanent.

As usual, time of year created its own challenges for prescribed burning. Fall, the more historical time to burn had a greater chance of fire escape. Winter had less window of opportunity to burn due to weather. Spring had a much greater window of opportunity for burning and less chance of escape. Mastication had no limitations except for the wintertime due again to potential erosion.

San Diego Unit makes history

***by Pete Scully, battalion chief,
San Diego Unit***

On Wednesday October 15, 2003, the San Diego Unit entered into the history books when it conducted the first ever binational Vegetation Management Burn between the United States and Mexico. The area involved encompassed 60 acres in the United States and 75 acres within Mexico. Though small in size, this block of the Bell Valley project was the first of its kind and an enormous step forward in cooperation with our neighbors and sister organizations to the South.

This project was the result of nearly a year of discussions, meetings and training between CDF, CONAFOR (Comision Nacional Forestal), the Federal agency responsible for wildland fire in Mexico, SFA (Secretaria de Fomento Agropecuario), the State

of Baja, Department of Agriculture and the Bomberos de Tecate, the local municipal fire department. During this time a relationship was established and trust between the agencies was developed and enhanced.

Two weeks prior to the binational burn, members of CONAFOR and the Bomberos de Tecate came to the United States and participated as trainees on a controlled burn conducted on another block of the Bell Valley VMP. After participating in this burn enthusiasm and support was high for the binational project.

Two days prior to the scheduled day of the binational burn members of CONAFOR and SFA met with CDF Captain Ruben Hernandez at the site in Mexico. Under the guidance of Captain Hernandez, handlines were constructed around the southern portion of the project.

On the morning of October 15, resources from CONAFOR, SFA and Captain Hernandez, who was assigned as CDF's Liaison to Mexico, arrived at the southern side of the border fence at Bell Valley. Units from the Bomberos de Tecate were also planning to participate but had to withdraw due to other commitments. At the same time resources from CDF, US Fish and Wildlife Service and Rural Fire Protection District arrived on the northern side of the fence.

Utilizing the existing Mutual Assistance Agreement between the two Countries, notifications were made to the respective Consulates and all parties crossed over the border to attend a unified operational briefing. Incident Action Plans were distributed in both Spanish and English. The day's weather, operational plan, and safety

concerns were reviewed during the operational briefing. Final notifications were made and approval received to commence the burn. Approval was given by the Incident Commander to commence firing operations at 0915 hours.

Resources from Mexico with support from CDF's helicopter 303s helitack crew began burning from the border fence to the south and west. Simultaneously, CDF resources, with support from our American cooperators, began burning to the north and west. A single Operations Chief from CDF coordinated both operations. Burning conditions were well within prescription and operations proceeded as planned.

Upon reaching the western portion of the burn, firing on the Mexican side was halted (as planned) as resources from the US side fired down hill, across the border and into a river bottom in Mexico tying into the southern operation from the south. In support of the firing on the west side, CDF and its cooperators performed a 3,000-foot hose lay from the United States down to the river bottom in Mexico. The firing operation was completed by 1,200 hours and minimal mop-up was started along the hose lay portion of the burn.

Personnel from both sides of the border were very pleased with the operation and the outcome and expressed a great deal of enthusiasm toward continued cooperation and a strong desire to pursue future cooperative projects of this cross border nature.

FirePALS

by Janet Marshall, fire prevention specialist II, Butte Unit

WHAT IS FIRE PALS?

The North Valley Fire PALS (Prevention And Life Safety) is a children's education troupe that was started three years ago by BTU CDF. The group consists of several emergency response agencies in Butte County. These agencies are Butte County Fire Department, Butte County Sheriff's Office, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Enloe Emergency Services, First Responder Paramedics, Oroville Fire Department, Paradise Fire Department and the Paradise Police Department.

WHAT DO THE FIRE PALS DO?

The emergency responders that make up the group are those who see the day-to-day accidents that cause injury and loss of life to the children in their communities. The Fire PALS organization provides a venue to try and stop these accidents before they occur. This is accomplished by bringing safety messages to life through music, comedy and characterization for elementary school students throughout the county. The life and fire safety messages include burn prevention, stranger awareness, helmet safety, gun safety, 9-1-1, Stop, Drop and Roll, Exit Drills in the Home, smoke detectors and seatbelt safety. Water safety and poison control lessons are in development and will be tested this fall on the students that attend the Fire

PALS partner in education school, Ophir Elementary in Oroville. Dr. Linebarger, the school's principal, along with the teachers at Ophir, review the Fire PALS curriculum and give it a stamp of approval from an educator's point of view. The troupe then takes their hour long program on the road, often doing up to three programs a day, for an entire week each spring.

SUCCESS!

The group had its first documented success story this past fall when 8-year-old Garrett Davis of Concow remembered one of the Fire PALS lessons on "Exit Drills in the Home". Garrett and his family, including his 3-year-old brother Jared, his four-month-old baby sister and his mother, ran outside after an explosion rocked their house the evening of November 13. Mrs. Davis found her husband lying on the ground with an arm injury he sustained from the blast that occurred while he was fueling a hot generator in a shed adjacent to the home. As the house began to catch fire, Garrett and Jared were left on their own while Mrs. Davis was simultaneously calling 9-1-1, holding her baby girl and attending to her husband. 3-year-old Jared was frightened and wanted to run back in the house to his room. Garrett told his little brother they had to stay out of the house and wait for the firefighters. Shortly after Jared tried to go back inside the house the first time, he attempted to

run inside after the family dog. Again, Garrett not only told Jared he couldn't go back in, he physically restrained him from returning to the house. When Mrs. Davis' attention was returned to the boys, she praised them for staying put. Garrett told his mother, and subsequently the press, that he learned to "get out and stay out" during the Fire PALS presentation at his school (Spring Valley) the year before.

The fact that Garrett remembered this important safety message from the spring Fire PALS program he saw as a second grader eight months prior to his family's home fire, illustrates what the Fire PALS have learned in the course of their training and that is when children are engaged in the learning process, they tend to have a retention level well into the 90th percentile.

"What happened with Garrett makes this worth all the time and effort we put into it," stated CDF Fire Captain Grayson Magana. "We believe the worst accident is the one that could have been prevented, especially when it comes to children."

The Butte Fire Safe Council has been extremely supportive of this Fire PALS program, awarding it two grants, one each for the past two years. The grants have allowed the program to go forward with their innovative efforts to educate children in Butte County.

Fresno-Kings arson arrest

by Karen Guillemín, fire prevention specialist II, Fresno-Kings Unit

On August 28, 2001 the Fresno- Kings Unit announced the arrest of James Bradley Haag of Fresno for arson. Mr. Haag was believed to be responsible for setting a number of fires including the Highway 180 fire, the Highway 168 fire and the Powerhouse Fire in 2000. Collectively, these fires cost the taxpayers well over \$8 million dollars to suppress.

On December 28, 2001, Derrick Zucco was arrested by Fire Captain Specialist, Josh Chrisman and Battalion Chief, Rick Moore. Mr. Zucco was arrested and charged with four counts of arson and one count of assault with a deadly weapon-vehicle. The arrest was made possible due to information provided by a private citizen, Tim Kochheiser.

On Tuesday November 26, 2002 at the FKU emergency command center Kurt Luikhart and Tim Kochheiser were presented with cash rewards for information provided that led to the arrest and conviction of the two separate arsonists. Mr. Luikhart and Mr. Kochheiser each decided to become involved and go above and beyond what is expected of any citizen. Their actions have prevented countless fires in the future and have saved the taxpayers millions of dollars. These two men supplied the Department with vehicle descriptions, license plate numbers and a description of the suspects they witnessed.

The Fresno Kings Unit recommended Mr. Luikhard and Mr. Kochheiser for the arson reward because they supplied significant

information for the arrest and conviction of the suspects. The recommendation is reviewed through channels for approval of payment. The information provided is evaluated for how it helps the case and the type and size of the fires. A recommendation is then made for all or part of the \$10,000 to be awarded to the witness. The State of California supplies the arson reward fund from general fund money. CDF believes this is an excellent investment and a cost savings for the citizens of California.

Both James Bradley Haag and Derrick Zucco were found guilty of arson. Mr. Zucco is currently serving two years in prison and Mr. Haag was sentenced to 115 years in prison.

Fire Prevention and Safety on the Web

Homeowners Checklist

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_checklist.php

A comprehensive list of the fire safe measures that every responsible wildland homeowner needs to take.

Fire Hazard Field Zoning Guide

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/zoning.html>

This Guide is a tool for fire agency personnel and local land use planners who are involved in the creation and implementation of local fire hazard zoning strategies.

Structural Fire Prevention Field Guide

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/structural.html>

This guide is meant to help fire agency, homeowners, landowners, decision-makers and local government in implementing state ordi-

nances that make structures more fire safe within the Urban-Wildland Interface.

Equipment Use Fact Sheet

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_content/downloads/equipment_use.pdf

The do's and don'ts of equipment use in wildland areas (lawn mowers, chainsaws, welders, tractors, etc.)

Public Resources Code 4291

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_publiccode4291.php

The law requires wildland homeowners to take fire safe measures.

Burn Permits

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/education_burnpermits.php

General information on burn permits in California.

CA Fire Alliance

<http://www.cafirealliance.org/>

The Alliance is a cooperative membership dedicated to the support of pre-fire principles and activities.

CA Fire Safe Councils

<http://www.firesafecouncil.org/>

The Fire Safe Council fulfills its mission to preserve California's natural and manmade resources by mobilizing all Californians to make their homes, neighborhoods and communities fire safe.

FIREWISE

<http://www.firewise.org/>

This web site contains educational information for people who live or vacation in fire-prone areas of the United States.

Hovercraft to Santa Catalina

by Mike “Spanky” Bratton, battalion chief, San Diego Unit

Another CDF first – CDF engines storm the beach as they respond to a vegetation fire on Santa Catalina Island.

In the dark and early morning hours of January 6, 2003, a strong Santa Ana wind event enveloped the southwestern counties of California, causing numerous fires, downed power lines, and numerous other wind-related incidents that kept CDF and other local fire agencies busy for more than two days. Included in the activity was the Pacific Island of Santa Catalina, some 20 miles offshore from Long Beach. At approximately 5:34 a.m. a fire was ignited after a power line was blown down by high winds on a ridge just southwest of the Catalina airport, which sits high above the harbor town of Avalon.

Most of the island of Santa Catalina is CDF responsibility inside the county of Los Angeles, where CDF contracts wildland fire protection to L.A. County Fire Department. Battalion Chief Mike Williams of LA County FD responded by helicopter to assist LA County FD Station 55, a combination paid/volunteer station and the only LA County station on the island. Upon his arrival, Williams saw the need for several hand crews and a type 3-engine strike team. A request then went out to CDF through the FIREScope Multi-agency Coordination System (MACS). Along with a fixed-wing and helicopter response, three hand crews from LA County FD and a type 3-engine strike team from the San Diego Unit responded to the fire to augment the few available engines that

the island could muster.

So you may be asking yourself, how did the fire resources get to Santa Catalina from the mainland? By US Navy hovercraft how else? More accurately, this craft is known as an LCAC - Landing Craft Air Cushion.

LA County has been using the LCAC for immediate transportation of fire resources for several years now with the cooperation of the US Navy. The Navy Assault Craft Unit – “Swift Intruders” are stationed at Camp Pendleton Marine Base in Oceanside, CA., one of two LCAC bases in the continental US. Through a pre-planned effort coordinated with the LCAC base, fire apparatus and personnel can be transported from either Camp Pendleton or Long Beach, depending on the needs for each incident.

Navy LCAC are a high-speed, over-the-beach fully amphibious landing craft capable of carrying a 60-75 ton payload. They are normally used to transport weapons systems, equipment, cargo and personnel from ship to shore and across the beach. The advantages of air-cushion landing craft are numerous. They can carry heavy payloads, such as an M-1 tank, at high speeds. Their payload and speed mean more forces reach the shore in a shorter time, with shorter intervals between trips. The vehicle rides on an air cushion approximately five feet above the land or ocean surface, which allows this vehicle to reach more than 70 percent of the world’s coastline, while conventional landing craft can land at only 15 percent of the coasts. All of these advantages, of course, make them an excel-

lent tool for transporting fire fighting resources to a remote island like Santa Catalina.

After the request for type 3 engines was received, Strike Team 9330C with Battalion 3316 and Engines 3388 (Ramona), 3381 (Miller), 3387 (San Marcos), 3374 (Campo), and 3375 (Cuyamaca) to the Camp Pendleton LCAC base at 4:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 7. There we met up with a well-trained crew from LA County FD who performed a thorough safety inspection of each vehicle in the strike team. After the inspection, we were given a safety briefing on how to travel safely across the open sea aboard the LCAC.

By 6:30 a.m. we began loading our apparatus aboard the first LCAC, which was able to fit four CDF engines (three Model 15s and one Model 1) on its deck. My 4WD pickup and the remaining Model 1 engine were loaded on a second LCAC along with a helitender and other LA County FD support equipment. The engine crews boarded along with the apparatus and were required to ride inside the cab, as the wind created by the LCAC’s powerful turbines is tremendous on the deck. I boarded the first LCAC and rode along in the cockpit with the three Navy personnel that are required to pilot the craft – pilot, engineer and navigator (each trip aboard an LCAC is considered a “flight”). This was done to maintain communication with the personnel in the engines.

The first LCAC was launched after a short and expertly ex-

*See **HOVERCRAFT**, page 11*

ecuted battening down of the apparatus by a skilled deck crew. Under combat conditions, once the LCAC arrive on the beach, this same crew is required to clear all military vehicles and personnel off the decks in two minutes or less! After a somewhat exciting beach entrance over a four-foot wave that chose to crash right onto the deck, we were underway. Moving westward, at an average of 40 knots, over a mildly rolling sea, the 60-plus nautical mile trip went off without a hitch – we arrived in an hour and a half.

Arriving at Little Harbor on the southwest shore of Santa Catalina, the LCAC landed on a beautiful tropical beach at Little Harbor. We were greeted by L A County FD BC Mike Williams and CDF Agency Rep, BC Kelly Zombro, along with a few LA County FD personnel. They briefed us on our assignment and soon after we were on the fire line of a 75-acre brush fire, where we spent the next two days working the fire.

Having spent a few days on Santa Catalina, beyond the normal duties of fighting a vegetation fire, we were able to see just what a gem the island is. Sitting on the same latitude as Casablanca, and just 2 degrees south of Crete, Santa Catalina Island seems equally exotic, a shimmering mirage just 20 miles (not 26 as the Four Preps sang in the '50s) across the sea from the port of Long Beach. There are no stoplights, no billboards - and the sheriff runs around in a souped-up golf cart. Cars are limited (it is said that there is a waiting list of around 10 years for new residents to bring automobiles over) and everything but the residents'

sunny dispositions has to be barged over. The hospitality extended by its citizens was fantastic. On the day we left the island the mayor of Avalon, Ralph Morrow, met us at Pebbly Beach and personally shook our hands and invited us back under better circumstances as we were waiting to board the LCAC for the

return trip home.

Once again, CDF met the challenge of responding to an emergency in one of the most unique settings imaginable.

For more info on the US Navy's LCAC program visit the site: <http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/factfile/ships/ship-lcac.html>

Sacramento River Labor Day Event Gets "Hot"

by Janet Marshall, fire prevention specialist II, Butte Unit

The annual Labor Day Tubing event brings over 15,000 revelers to the Sacramento River in BTU each year. CDF has a lead role in the task force that provides command and control for the incident – everything from participating in the unified command to public information to wildfire stand-bys to water rescue to providing the IAP for over 13 local, state and federal agencies.

CDF's versatility was especially evident this past Labor Day when the traditional half way point of the float, a brushy wildland area known locally as "Beer Can Beach", caught fire. The crew of CDF Engine 2169 quickly donned their PPE, grabbed several hosepacks, back pumps and their floato pump and jumped on a rescue boat piloted by Retired CDF Battalion Chief Dave Minton. The crew, escorted onto the beach filled with over 5,000 drunken revelers by Butte County Sheriff's deputies, quickly attacked the fire and held it at ¼ acre.

"It appears the fire was caused by smoking," stated Engineer

Matt Mackenzie. "It looks like someone tried to beat the fire out with a wet towel." The fire ran through some dry, matted marsh grass and was stopped just inches away from acres of dry brush on a large, inaccessible peninsula. "I can honestly say that's the first time I've done that," stated Firefighter Stephen Morris of his boat ride in full Nomex and web gear through a throng of drunken tubers. "It would be impossible to get engines in here."

The 16-hour day ended with 111 river assists, 15 medical emergencies, 25 DUI arrests and nearly 400 citations from various law enforcement agencies for minors in possession of alcohol and being drunk in public.

"We were expecting nearly 30,000 tubers this year," stated Incident Commander and CDF Battalion Chief Bill Redding. "We've been pushing a campaign that stresses the river is not the place to be on Labor Day. Our numbers are way down from last year so it looks like our tactic is working."

Weather's critical role in fire behavior

Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS)

by Josh Hubbard, staff writer, Public Education Office

The fire service recognizes weather as the most critical element in fire behavior. This is why the Remote Automated Weather Station (RAWS) is an important tool in protecting California from devastating wildfires. RAWS allows state-of-the-art weather predictions that are fast, accurate and recorded on an hourly basis. This information is readily accessible and alerts fire agencies to critical fire weather periods while also assisting in the prediction of how a fire will behave as conditions change or shift directions.

The National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service allows CDF to transmit and receive RAWS data via a Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES). The GOES satellite then re-transmits the data back to earth allowing any agency or individual with RAWS or a receiving dish for GOES to arrange to patch into the network to receive the data information.

Data that is received from the GOES satellite is collected by several agencies. The primary one is the Automated Sorting, Conversion and Distribution System (ASCADS). This system is run by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Data is also sent to the Weather Information Management System (WIMS) for fire danger rating calculations, the National Weather Service, the Western Regional Climate Center for long term data storage, and the University of Utah for operational products. CDF also collects the RAWS data for the Fire Plan

database. CDF has a network of 99 RAWS which are part of an interagency network of over 350 RAWS situated throughout the state. Data from all these RAWS is shared by various agencies without regard to ownership.

At the local level, CDF uses the RAWS data on a daily basis. The CDF Butte Unit is a prime example. Within the Butte Unit there are a total of four RAWS stations located at Cohasset, Chico, Carpenter Ridge, and Bangor. Butte also has a portable RAWS unit that is placed out on fires and other emergency incidents to assist fire officials with critical weather information.

Data from each one of the RAWS stations is transmitted every hour, collected and stored. This data is available from a variety of sources but the Internet serves as the easiest way for the casual user to obtain real time information for each site, (<http://raws.boi.noaa.gov/rawsobs.html>.) RAWS is extremely accurate and collects data about every second on the hour and transmits this data every hour at a specific time. Once this data is collected, the Butte Unit reviews the information and determines the current fire weather conditions throughout their Unit on an hourly basis. Much of the RAWS process is automated but the stations do require periodic maintenance and calibration. Currently the Communications Division of the Department of General Services has the contract for the maintenance in coordination with the units.

The RAWS stations are solar

powered and automatically detect conditions such as air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and direction, fuel moisture and temperature, barometric pressure, and precipitation. The system receives, compiles, sorts and then files the data that is available for a local agency to download via computer. This information can be displayed on maps, charts, and graphs to show the weather conditions throughout the state. Historical data and condition that may be familiar to a certain area or time of day are also available by using the system. RAWS stations have had a positive impact on many organizations and have assisted CDF in doing the job in a safer and more efficient way.

There are a variety of users that rely on this information from the RAWS station. In addition to CDF, others include Department of Water Resources (DWR), National Park Service (NPS), National Weather Service (NWS), and the United States Forest Service (USFS).

The Butte Unit uses the data throughout the year; however, the primary use falls during the fire season when weather patterns and conditions play big roles in the wildfire danger. Monitoring weather conditions is an important and necessary method of assisting firefighting efforts to reduce losses and protect lives.

Emergency Command Centers (ECC) are able to set up the emergency response levels based on the current fire danger predicted by RAWS and it also allows the ECC to announce the

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current Burn Index values to help firefighters with their pre-arrival size-up. "RAWS has been a complete success far exceeding the systems and expectations of initial fire agencies. It has provided accurate weather observations giving fire fighting personnel an advantage in safety," said Pete Guilbert, Fire Protection Operations Chief.

CDF CCVs Get New Look To Become ECTs

by Mike Ursitti, forestry equipment manager II, CDF Northern Region HQ

Folks are seeing a little different version of the crew carrying vehicles (CCVs) used by CDF's conservation camps these days. Many of them now have Code 3 emergency lighting and warning sirens on them. In an effort to provide a more effective fire fighting force, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection pursued and received a federal grant to purchase and install Code 3 emergency lighting and warning sirens on approximately 50 percent of its crew carrying vehicles. These vehicles serve as transportation for the inmate hand crews that CDF uses to perform emergency response assignments and conservation related work projects.

CDF recognized the value of equipping the CCVs with emergency warning devices several years ago. With the onset of urban migration into what once were largely rural settings, traffic and congestion has become commonplace in areas that were designed to handle much smaller vehicular traffic. Often times,

there are delays in the transport of fire ready crews, many of which are stuck in traffic, causing extended response times.

In order to find a solution, the Department decided to pursue a federal grant that would allow for the funding of emergency lighting and warning devices that would effectively clear the traffic corridors, allowing the vehicles to proceed cautiously through traffic. The intent of the installation was to provide another tool for firefighters to move through congested areas quickly and safely, shortening response times and possibly saving additional lives and property.

When the grant funding was received, it was decided to install lights and sirens on approximately 108 crew carrying vehicles. These signaling devices, once installed, would change the familiar acronym of the CCV (crew carrying vehicles) to ECT (emergency crew transports). These ECTs represent later model vehicles, all 1990 and newer. The lighting and siren package included a large roof-mounted flashing light bar, red flashing front grill lights, flashing side and rear lighting, audible sirens, and alternating (flashing) headlights. These vehicles are similar to other emergency response vehicles. When an ECT is responding with the lights in operation, drivers should pull over to the right, use caution, and provide for safe passage of the emergency vehicle. In keeping with the department's Code 3 policy, vehicle operators are asked to use caution whenever the vehicle is responding to incidents, in all circumstances.

All of the after market installations were completed by the end of June, 2003. All new vehicles arriving from the CDF

Davis Equipment Facility will have the Code 3 equipment installed by the vendor that is constructing the vehicle.

There were many CDF employees involved in the installation process of these ECT conversions. The Davis Equipment Facility led the project by obtaining the warning devices, conducting the installation training and making every effort to ensure that the field had all of the tools and materials to make this project a success. The staff at the Davis Equipment Facility included Senior Forestry Equipment Manager Rick Brown, Forestry Equipment Manager II Richard Armstrong, and Heavy Equipment Mechanic Michael Kay.

Special mention needs to be made to the following CDFers for their efforts in the installation of the vehicles, and training of the operators and inmates during the project: Forestry Equipment Manager Danny Sykes, Shasta-Trinity Unit, Forestry Equipment Manager Rich Mattos, Lassen-Modoc Unit, Forestry Equipment Manager George Mattos, Nevada-Yuba-Placer Unit, Forestry Equipment Manager Larry Hilbert, Tehama-Glenn Unit, Fleet Equipment Manager Army Bolkcom, Humboldt-Del Norte Unit, Forestry Equipment Manager Robert Gutierrez, San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit, Forestry Equipment Manager Mike Morgan, Northern Region Headquarters, Forestry Equipment Manager Jim Smith, Fresno-Kings Unit, Heavy Equipment Manager Jay MacDonald, Davis Mobile Equipment Facility, Heavy Equipment Manager Jason Kane, Lassen-Modoc Unit, Fleet Manager John Carrier, Southern Region Headquarters, and Fleet Manager Gordon Gholson, South-

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ern Region Headquarters.

Special thanks goes to Case Buttermann, deputy chief, Conservation Camp Program, and Bryan Zollner, deputy chief, Operations, Northern Region, for their support, funding, attention, tracking, and drive to get this program underway and completed prior to the 2003 Summer Preparedness response period.

CDF staff chief goes to Ukraine

*by Dave LeMay,
staff chief,
Cooperative Fire*

Friday April 25, 1986, 1524 hours, Pacific Standard Time, I remember where I was. Division chief, Tehama-Glenn Unit in Red Bluff, California. Unbeknown to the rest of the world, technicians and engineers at Russia's premier nuclear power plant – Chernobyl – were engaged in experiments and system testing that would change the entire nuclear power industry for all time.

Testing had been started 24 hours earlier that would evaluate the system and program performance regarding the residual power available from stored mechanical energy from the turbine generators. This data was needed to determine the energy available for safety systems when steam delivery from the nuclear reactor was interrupted. The testing would determine the reliable forced circulation in the cooling system during the period between complete loss of facility power and full auxiliary Diesel-generator operation

power restoration.

Chernobyl time was Saturday April 26, 1986, 0124 hours. Ten seconds earlier the reactor control operator activated the “reactor manual emergency shutdown” AZ-5 button. The system had responded to the testing with an increase in positive reactivity and as a result an uncontrolled reactor runaway had been started in the lower section of the reactor. The senior engineer recorded “...: strong knocks, CPS rods stopped before reaching the lower ends ...”

The resulting steam and reactor explosion lifted the 200-ton concrete lid of the reactor into the air, extruded large blocks of radiated graphite and pellets of raw plutonium from the reactor into the air and on to the roofs of adjoining reactor and turbine building. The lid came down sideways straight down into the reactor. Several reactor operators were killed. Electrical and structure fires were ignited by the explosion and super heated radioactive materials. Just like any other emergency, the fire department responded.

The six firefighters, fully trained in fire suppression techniques, knew that they had to stop the fire from extending and damaging Unit 3 (Unit 4 was history) or the fire extending into the turbine building and causing a complete shutdown of power. Either of these could imperil the lives of plant operators and the populace in nearby Pripyat Town, PORNOBYLopulation 50,000.

On October 4, 2003, CDF Staff Chief - Cooperative Fire Protection, David B. LeMay traveled to Slavutych and Chernobyl, Ukraine as part of a multidisciplinary team of civilian fire, health, and emergency response personnel along with the Califor-

nia National Guard. The purpose of the trip was to study and learn from the Chernobyl accident, the resulting impacts, and the continuing response and activities that were being employed over 17 years after the incident.

The team received instruction and information, through various interpreters and guides, from several Russian and Ukrainian experts. The Lead Instructor and Nuclear and Radiation Safety Advisor, Volodimir Scherbina provided a wealth of information regarding the situation that lead up to the accident, the response, damages, lessons learned, and the ongoing activities to mitigate the effects.

Upon the completion of three days of instruction and various short trips to the Slavutych Hospital and Fire Station, the team spent the day at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant. Each member was provided with the standard Radiation Dosimeter and was instructed on what areas or materials to avoid.

Those instructions included, “Don’t sit on the concrete blocks, they’re still radioactive.”; “Stay on the hard surfaces, the dirt still contains particles that might be charged”; and “Don’t walk on the moss, it picks up the radioactivity from the soil.” I was glad that my Official Certificate for External Irradiation only read 0.04 mSv by the end of the day.

While traveling in the “Exclusion Zone” the team was shown the effects of working to mitigate the effects of the accident. Several hundred vehicles and helicopters were contaminated during the activities and were abandoned. As these vehicles age the radiation lessens and salvage of metal parts may be possible. (I

*See **CHORNOBYL**, page 15*

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thought I saw an AMU FEPP tag signed by Dave Wardall on one of the helicopters.)

During the field trip the team visited the Memorial to the Fallen Fire Fighters and Emergency Workers that responded to the Chornobyl accident. At the Fire Station in the Town of Chornobyl, the station personnel designed and built the Memorial to their fallen comrades. The Memorial depicts the actions that the Fire Fighters took to stop the spread of the fire into Unit 3 and the Turbine Building and the Emergency Workers that mitigated the radiological impacts of the accident.

The main "Lessons Learned" from the Chornobyl Incident include: Full and Complete Pre-Planning and Emergency Response Capabilities; Training and a full understanding by emergency responders of all hazards that they will face, and conducting exercises for any and all possible scenarios; Trust in the reports of first-in company officers and initiate immediate action based on those reports; and, Immediate Command and Control at the Incident, with the full authority and responsibility to order all necessary actions to protect life, property, and to provide for emergency responders' safety.

Firefighter Commemorative Stamp

***Karen Guillemin,
fire prevention specialist II,
Fresno-Kings Unit***

A firefighter memorial stamp dedication ceremony was held on July 2, 2002 at Fresno County

Fire District Station 90 in Caruthers. The United States Postal service sponsored the event in which the firefighter commemorative stamp was unveiled. In attendance at the ceremony were Unit Chief Steve Sunderland, Deputy Chief Ted Mendoza, Division Chief Larry German, Fire Apparatus Engineer Peter Trowbridge, Fire Captain Mark Brodowski, several firefighters, PCF's, members of the Fire District Board, Postal Service representatives, and local residents. It was a full house in the garage at station 90. A sale of the stamps was conducted by post office staff, refreshments were served and a plaque of the event was on display.

Weapons of mass destruction *Alturas, California prepares*

***by Leah Sandberg,
office technician,
Lassen-Modoc Unit***

On January 27 the peaceful atmosphere of Alturas, California was shattered. The Alturas Police Department received a call from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) that some type of chemical agent had been released at a local high school basketball game three days earlier. That morning, two local residents were admitted to Modoc Medical Center, diagnosed with the plague. The hospital was quarantined until the magnitude of the problem could be determined.

Later that afternoon, several

high school students reported that six or seven men had chased them out of the old lumber mill site that was being used to house railroad cars. Three suspects fled the scene when police arrived. Three others began destroying equipment. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) apprehended two of the suspects after a high-speed chase down Highway 299.

The Alturas Fire Department went to the mill site prepared to deal with a suspected methamphetamine lab. When they arrived, they noticed several explosive devices placed around one of the boxcars. The fire chief and crew withdrew until police could question the suspects who had been apprehended. Upon questioning the suspects, law enforcement officials began to suspect that a terrorist group was responsible for operating the lab. They became concerned that the boxcar might contain weapons of mass destruction. A decision was made to activate an emergency operations center to be staffed by various agencies. Shocked that something like this could occur in Modoc County and feeling a little overwhelmed by the magnitude of the situation, the operations center commander requested help from state authorities and the National Guard's 95th Weapons of Mass Destruction – Civil Support Team (95th).

The 95th arrived late that afternoon with equipment capable of detecting nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological materials. Their equipment included a self-contained command center, decontamination unit, field laboratory, communication links, and all the personal

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protective equipment needed to investigate these threats. The team members, led by Lt. Col. John Haramalis, suited up and entered the smoking boxcar. The boxcar was booby-trapped with a trip wire rigged to detonate a barrel armed with nails and C-4 explosives. The team disarmed the trap and proceeded into the boxcar where they found the lab. Team members began gathering samples. Once this process was completed, they started the decontamination process. Each team member was rinsed and scrubbed several times and the contaminated water was sealed in separate barrels for later disposal. A hand-held metering instrument was used to confirm that team members were fully decontaminated.

While the decontamination process was taking place, the samples were taken into the field lab to determine what type of contaminant was present. The laboratory contained infrared spectrometers, gamma spectrometers, and other equipment capable of identifying more than 250,000 organic compounds.

A second team from the 95th suited up and entered the boxcar to take additional samples and to begin cleanup. One team member was taken hostage, when an armed terrorist surprised them. A local SWAT team was called in from the Alturas Police Department and Modoc County Sheriff's Office. After suiting up, the SWAT team entered the boxcar and was able to free the hostage. The terrorist was killed in the process.

Though this scenario did not actually occur, it is something that the 95th prepares for and trains for on a regular basis, and

Alturas was pleased to have the honor of hosting this particular training exercise. So how did Alturas get the opportunity to host such a training exercise: a prestigious opportunity requested by many larger cities. Lt. Col. John Haramalis, the team's commander, met Roger Dorris, Fire Chief for the City of Alturas and owner of Dorris Realty when he came to Modoc County looking for property. Haramalis invited Dorris to Benecia, California to see the 95th in action. Dorris felt Haramalis and his men could provide valuable training to the Modoc County Emergency Services Team and asked how he could get the team up to northern California for a training exercise. Lt. Col. Haramalis said all Dorris had to do was ask. Haramalis was interested in having his team experience a cold weather scenario. The details were developed and the date was set for January 27.

Several CDF staff from Lassen-Modoc Unit had the opportunity to observe the three-day training exercise. Battalion Chief John Hughes was among them. "We were called upon by Alturas City Fire Department to provide assistance in evaluating and controlling the exercise. More precisely, they wanted us to evaluate their use of the Incident Command System (ICS) and the components/functions of a hazardous materials incident. We were happy to be able to take part. We also provided some other logistical support as requested by the city", said Chief Hughes. "The Civil Support Team arrived equipped and staffed to handle nearly anything that might be thrown at them. They came with a complete communications unit, monitoring

and testing equipment, full level "A" entry and decontamination capabilities. Every member of the team is hand selected and the depth of training and experience on the team is impressive. To the teams credit was their emphasis on providing assistance to the local agency, not taking over. They were able to provide very good advice to the Incident Commander on how to handle various problems. I was impressed with the efficiency, effectiveness, and capabilities of this team. I had no idea that such a resource was available."

On January 30 the 95th loaded up their equipment and headed home. Alturas returned to the peaceful town it once was – a little excited for the experience and a lot wiser.

A spider in Humboldt County

***Juliana Gilman,
Safety-Training Office,
Humboldt-Del Norte Unit***

For 10 days in March and April of 2003, approximately 55 employees from the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit (HUU) enrolled in a driving course using the revolutionary SkidCar System.

The SkidCar System was developed in Sweden and modeled on the "stable platform concept of driving". Dubbed "The Spider", the SkidCar apparatus looks like a large red platform with eight hydraulic outriggers. The premise of the SkidCar System places a driver into a skid from any wheel or wheels to test the drivers' recovery when a skid occurs. The goal of the

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training is to enable a driver to develop insight on how to correct a skid properly, or how to avoid a skid situation in the first place. The stable platform concept of driving refers to the physical starting point for grip, in other words, where the rubber meets the road.

Santa Rosa Jr. College purchased the SkidCar System for \$110,000 and it has quickly become a popular feature in the fire science curriculum. Used in conjunction with a donated CDF Model 12 engine, it is the only training apparatus of its type on a fire engine in the United States.

The genesis of bringing the SkidCar System driving course to HUU began over a year ago when Safety-Training Battalion Chief Dave Short negotiated a loan with Santa Rosa Jr. College. In March of 2002 Chief Short enrolled HFEO Robert Barrow in a Train-the-Trainer course in Santa Rosa. Selecting HFEO Barrow to instruct the unique driving course was wise; his calm, controlled manner is paramount for any motor vehicle instructor. Upon completion of the course, Barrow was proficient in operating the HAL SCC (SkidCar Controller) used for maneuvering the hydraulic skids. These hydraulic skids are designed to raise and/or lower the front or back end of the engine simulating a loss of control and, in most cases, a 180-degree spin.

When I spoke to Robert Barrow about the SkidCar, the first thing I wanted to know was how it got up here. It was a logistical challenge utilizing the time, effort, and skill of HFEOs Robert Barrow and Bob Ladd each driving a low bed transport from

HUU to the Santa Clara Unit. One transport hauled the Model 12 engine; the other was used for the SkidCar platform. In addition to the drive back to Humboldt County, three more hours were required to make it operational.

The day I drove the SkidCar was a memorable one. There was a break in the weather and it was warm outside. As I drove to the parking lot of the defunct Eel River Sawmill I saw the familiar red and white markings of a CDF engine, but it looked different. The engine was sitting atop a raised red platform all the way around. I walked toward the engine that held several of my co-workers intending to simply observe the SkidCar in operation.

"Get in—you're driving" I heard someone say. I offered up a lame excuse, certain there was no way I could possibly drive a vehicle that large, though I had been assured by Instructor Barrow there was no chance the engine could or would flip over. What I experienced was an opportunity to do something I had never done before—*drive a fire engine and put it into a 180-degree spin!* After I spun out a second time, Barrow asked me what I saw, felt, or recalled during the spin. I was unable to answer any of his questions because it seemed that time both stopped and hurtled forward. It was bizarre.

Instructor Barrow assured me this was a common reaction and provided me with a useful tool for the next time. "Focus on that mud puddle between the orange cones when you feel the skidding begin". I doubted whether I would have the presence of mind to pull it off, but it worked. The principle behind this advice is part of the SkidCar System

philosophy: 90 percent is sight—your life expectancy is based on what you see; 5 percent is touch—the greater the "G" force, the lesser your stability, and 5 percent is hearing—listen to your tires.

According to the SkidCar System ideology, however, at the end of the day no matter what path you drive or how great a driver you are, if you go too fast for the conditions, you will crash.

At work the following day I shared my experience with co-workers who promptly signed up for the class. Like me, they surprised themselves by driving a vehicle that large and learning to react safely as it spun out of control. Although some skeptics maintain the skid pan technique taught at the Academy is just as viable, most students had high praise for the course. The HUU Safety-Training office structured the training classes in 3-hour blocks twice a day, with each session accommodating 3-4 students. Attendance was diverse and not limited to engineers. Battalion Chiefs, HFEOs, support staff and foresters all found the training beneficial, on the job and off.

For additional information about the SkidCar, go to www.SkidCar.com. See the SkidCar in operation by clicking on the MOVIES link.

BCs serve lunch in TGU

On Wednesday December 3, 2003 the Tehama Glenn Unit honored its office support staff with a personalized luncheon. The ladies were treated to an

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Coalinga Forest Fire Station Dedication

by Karen Guillemín, fire prevention specialist II, Fresno-Kings Unit

The Fresno-Kings Unit held a formal open house and dedication to showcase the newest CDF station in Fresno County. The open house was held on May 31, 2003 at the Coalinga Forest Fire Station 25600 W. Jayne Ave, Coalinga, California.

Among the many dignitaries in attendance were CDF Director Andrea Tuttle, Public Education Deputy Chief Dick Hayes, CSR Chief Tim Turner, CSR Assistant Chief Candace Gregory, FKU Unit Chief Steve Sunderland, Fresno County Supervisor Phil Larson, and Fresno County Fire District Director's Sylvia Gomez and Amy Knight.

The construction of the Coalinga Forest Fire Station was completed prior to the 2001 fire season. The facility was constructed on 6.5 acres of land that used to be Fresno County Fire District Station 92. During the planning stages of the facility, it was determined that approximately \$50,000 would be allocated to provide for the

landscaping of the grounds. However, due to budgetary constraints, this money was cut from the final budget. This cut resulted in a brand new two million dollar facility on 6.5 acres of flat barren land.

Knowing that the department was not in a financial position to help with the landscaping project, the 2002 Coalinga crew turned to family and friends to raise the supplies needed to get started on the landscaping. Four months later, the crew had labored for more than 1,250 personnel hours, raised over \$30,000 in goods and services, planted 60 trees, seeded 1/3 of an acre of grass, planted 200 plants, installed 130 yards of wood chips, placed 50 tons of landscape boulders on 140 yards of fresh top soil, and found the time to fight fires and respond to other emergencies throughout the state.

The open house was a huge success with more than 250 donors, citizens, and employees in attendance. The Coalinga Fire

Crew served hot dogs, chili beans, potato salad, and drinks while visitors toured the station and static displays. CDF copter 406 and Fresno County Sheriff's Eagle One helicopter made a welcomed appearance at the event. Many children were intrigued and entertained by the equipment and interactive fire prevention props that were on hand for their education.

State Assembly Woman Nicole Para's office presented the employees of Coalinga Station with a resolution for their creativity, motivation, and service to the citizens of Fresno County and the State of California.

The collaborative efforts of the employees assigned to the Coalinga Station and the generosity of many local businesses and citizens have provided the residents of Fresno County and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection with a station they can be proud of.

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employee catered meal served on fine china and waited on hand and foot by unit chief officers. The menu included marinated tri-tip, potato gratin, bean caserole and pumpkin crisp desert. Each dish was personally prepared by the serving staff. This event was to acknowledge the unit's appreciation for the hard work the staff does in support of our mission. This year the ladies often worked short handed and had many new provisions to overcome. The changes in the purchasing policies, contract

adjustments and seasonal hiring meant many long hours putting things in order so that we could concentrate on our mission of firefighting. The event was so successful that it has been dubbed the first annual staff appreciation luncheon. This year's attendees were Sue Walker, Mickie Jakez, Heidi Nuchols, Jani Brewer, Lori Loucks and Karen Baros. The cooks / waiters for this years luncheon were Battalion Chiefs Gary Lyon, Jack Lefort and Dale Kinyon.

COMMUNIQUE'

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor
State of California

Michael Chrisman
Resources Secretary
The Resources Agency

Andrea E. Tuttle
Director
Department of Forestry
and Fire Protection

Lisa Boyd
Editor
CDF Public Education Office
916-653-5123

www.fire.ca.gov

